

EXPLORING JOINT STIFFNESS

This activity provides a quick exploration of how even one joint can throw the proverbial wrench into how the body moves and functions.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Stresses the importance of flexibility.
- ⦿ Explores how each joint matters in a quick, fun, easy activity.
- ⦿ Shows problems associated with decreased range of motion.

How to Do It »

Ask for a few volunteers to role-play some simple examples of what happens when a particular joint freezes up. Pick participants one or two at a time to demonstrate the following:

- ⦿ Walk with stiff, arthritic knees.
- ⦿ Walk with one knee suffering from a sprain or strain.
- ⦿ Pretend one hip just won't be getting out of bed today. Walk with one hip stiff.
- ⦿ Stand on both feet when a thorn is stuck under the left big toe. Try Walking.
- ⦿ Walk with an aching, stiff back.
- ⦿ Be seated. Pretend one shoulder is stiff and sore. Try to reach a bottle of ibuprofen on a top shelf.

Ask what did they learn from each other? Did joint stiffness limit motion? Was balance trickier with just one stiff knee or hip? Are joint limitations important when it comes to walking, moving, seated activities, and weight bearing?

Live It »

The ways in which participants can move and position their joints affects how they move and balance. Greater flexibility means more efficient, safer movements.